

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Claims 1-32 are pending herein. Claim 1 is independent. No amendment is made herein.

In the pending Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-32 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over GB Patent No. 2,323,297 (Christopher) in view of United States Patent No. 4,659,090 (Kustanovich.). Applicants have carefully considered the Examiner's rejection, and the reasons given in support thereof, and respectfully disagree with the conclusions reached by the Examiner. For the reasons set forth in more detail below, applicants submit that the invention as claimed is patentably distinct from the references applied by the Examiner, taken alone or in combination.

The following description of the invention is taken from the specification, and is provided for the convenience of the Examiner. It is not intended to argue limitations not present in the claims or to argue for an interpretation of any claim term that is narrower than, or otherwise different from, the broadest reasonable interpretation of such term as would be accorded such term by one of ordinary skill in the art after a full and fair reading of the specification in conjunction with the drawings.

The invention herein is directed to an exercise sheet or mat for use with a moving object, such as a ball. The inventive mat includes an outer layer having a first pattern of electrically conductive elements and an inner layer having a second pattern of electrically conductive elements. The first and second patterns intersect at predetermined positions defining pressure sensitive switches. The inner and outer layers are separated by an insulation layer, which includes a plurality of cavities or holes at the positions of the intersections which define the pressure sensitive switches. When the outer layer is impacted by the moving object, the outer layer flexes towards the inner layer, closing the switch or switches at the location(s) of impact, thereby indicating by such switch closings the location of the impact on the mat. Each cavity includes at least one sideways facing

opening to permit the outflow of air in the cavity upon impact. At least one of the first and second patterns is subdivided into a number of individual zones, each comprising a plurality of individual pressure sensitive switches. This structure is nowhere shown in the applied art.

The primary reference applied by the Examiner is Christopher. Christopher discloses a sports training or practice apparatus which includes an upright wall 18 having one or more target areas 1-4. A pressure sensitive switch matrix 20 detects impact of a ball on one of the target areas. Matrix 20 includes a first layer 22 with conductive regions 24 thereon and a series of switch contacts 32 which contact respective ones of regions 24 upon impact to close switches and thereby indicate whether a player has struck one of the target areas. First layer 22 and switch contacts 32 are separated by a separation layer 26 having apertures 28 therein, which are positioned to correspond to target areas 1-4. The Examiner has likened the claimed insulating layer to separation layer 26 of Christopher, *including* the presence of “at least one opening directed sideways for air movement” upon impact, as required by claim 1 (Office Action, p. 3). However, Christopher does *not* disclose the presence of any sideways directed apertures for permitting the flow of air out of an aperture 28 in Christopher upon impact, and therefore this feature is *completely lacking* in Christopher, even though the Examiner describes Christopher as having that feature.

The addition of Kustanovich does not overcome this deficiency in Christopher.

Kustanovich discloses an electrical device for indicating the force and/or location of target impacts or other forces. The disclosed device includes a plurality of concentric individual impact zones, such as a dartboard, with each zone having a single switch for detecting an impact in the zone, as by a dart. The Examiner has applied Kustanovich as showing the use of multiple switches in individual zones, but does not argue that it shows the use of sideways-directed apertures for

permitting air to move out of an aperture upon impact as, indeed, he cannot, because this feature is lacking in Kustanovich, as well.

Thus, the invention as claimed is distinct from the references applied by the Examiner for at least the reason that neither applied reference teaches or describes sideways-directed openings for air movement upon impact. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore solicited.

There being no further grounds of objection or rejection, early and favorable reconsideration and action are solicited.

It is believed that no fees or charges are required at this time in connection with the present application. However, if any such fees or charges are required at this time, they may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,
COHEN PONTANI LIEBERMAN & PAVANE LLP

By /Roger S. Thompson/
Roger S. Thompson
Reg. No. 29,594
551 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1210
New York, New York 10176
(212) 687-2770

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